



STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

INEZ MOORE TENENBAUM
STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF EDUCATION

MEMORANDUM

TO: District Superintendents
Assistant Superintendents for Instruction
District Test Coordinators

FROM: Theresa G. Siskind, Director
Office of Assessment

DATE: March 25, 2005

RE: Update on Assessments

Spring has arrived, the end of the school year is in sight, and this memo includes a few reminders that will help assessment go smoothly. The most current information from the Office of Assessment about various testing programs is highlighted. **Please share this information with all appropriate staff members in your district.** Copies will be sent only to the addressees above. Remember that the District Test Coordinator (DTC) is the official district contact with all contractors.

General Information

Student Cheating – The Office of Assessment continues to receive inquiries regarding student cheating. Districts should investigate any alleged cheating incident and make a determination regarding its merit. If, based on the evidence, it appears that a student cheated, district policies and procedures regarding cheating should be followed to pursue this violation. If a district invalidates a student's test score because of verified evidence of cheating, the district should notify the Office of Assessment in writing as soon as possible. The following information must be submitted: the district, school, and student name, student ID number, grade, gender, ethnicity, test name, test subject, the date of the violation, a description of the violation, and the district's action.

Scheduling Training Sessions – District Test Coordinators (DTCs) should ensure that School Test Coordinators (STCs), test administrators (TAs), and monitors are trained before testing. It is important that all personnel involved with test administrations read the appropriate Test Administration Manuals (TAMs) and understand all policies and procedures described for test administration, test security, receipt of materials, and packaging and return of test materials. Test security agreement forms can be signed at this time. Please keep all test security agreement forms on file for at least three years.

This year, for PACT, we have provided a separate pullout section for monitors including the separate test security form that is more applicable to their functions within the classroom. The perforated pages for the monitors are located in Appendix F of the PACT TAM and can be copied for as many personnel as needed.

NCS Mentor for South Carolina

Contact: Amelia Brailsford 803-734-8019 abrailsf@sde.state.sc.us

The corrected CDs for the NCS Mentor software program have been duplicated and are being packaged for shipment from the contractor. We anticipate that all district shipments will be received no later than March 25, 2005. The corrected version is currently available on-line at www.ncsmentor.com/customers.htm (keyword = palmetto).

South Carolina Readiness Assessment Profile Interactive (SCRAPI)

Contact: Jim Casteel 803-734-8293 jcasteel@sde.state.sc.us

For districts using the Spring rating period (i.e., you use three or four rating periods), it is time to complete those ratings. If you do not use the Spring rating period, please remind teachers that the final ratings must be Year End not Spring. Reports will be based only on the Year End ratings.

It appears that many teachers rated students in Fall when their intention was to rate Winter (as required). These teachers **do not** need to go back and correct those ratings. The data may require some manipulation later, but is not an efficient use of teacher time to make those changes now.

The final student ratings should be completed during the last three weeks of the school year. This varies according to your district calendar. All ratings must be completed by June 15th. This date is later than in past years and means that written reports will not be received until later in the summer (previously the end of June).

Palmetto Achievement Challenge Tests (PACT)

Contact: Susan Creighton 803-734-8535 screight@sde.state.sc.us

1st PACT Shipment – PACT Test Administration Manuals (TAMs), Sample Item booklets, and Sample Item Guides should have arrived in the districts on March 11. DTCs should contact DRC's South Carolina Project team at scproject@datarecognitioncorp.com if you did not receive your shipment. Black tabs have been added to all pages of the TAM, including the front cover, to assist you in finding specific information more quickly.

Reference Sheets, Rulers, and Protractors – The math reference sheets have been slightly modified for the spring 2005 administration. Revisions include the addition of some right angle symbols and center points to some of the figures on each reference sheet. Rulers will be the same as the ones distributed last year, however, a new vendor will be producing them for DRC. The change was made to ensure that all schools receive a better quality ruler for the 2005 test administration. DRC will mail an adequate number of new rulers for the students taking PACT math. The protractors have a slightly new design and will be larger than the ones used last year. Links to the updated reference sheets and a picture of the rulers have been posted to the PACT web page at: <http://www.myschools.com/offices/assessment/PACT/index.htm>. A picture of the protractor will be added to the web page as soon as it is available. Please let your schools know that they should **not** use old versions of the math reference sheets, the ruler, or the protractor.

ELA “Time to Write” Instructions – In response to suggestions from teachers and curriculum coordinators, we have made minor revisions to the “Time to Write” instructions on Day 1 of the ELA test for **grades 3-8**.

- The blank “prewriting page” has been removed from the ELA test booklets. The “Time to Write” directions in the test booklet instruct students to make their graphic organizers and write their rough drafts on their lined scratch paper.
- The language in the directions has been revised so that the writing of the rough draft sounds less like an optional activity.
- The Administration Directions in the PACT TAM now refer to the extended writing question or prompt as the “Time to Write” topic.

The Administration Directions in the spring 2005 PACT TAM reflect all of these revisions to the “Time to Write” instructions. (See pages 56-58 for grades 3-5 and pages 66-69 for grades 6-8.) The directions for grades 1 and 2 were not changed. A copy of the 2005 “Time to Write” directions, as they will appear in the ELA test booklets, is available in the 2005 Sample Item booklets and on the PACT web page at: <http://www.myschools.com/offices/assessment/PACT/index.htm>.

Alternate Assessment

Contact: Suzanne Swaffield 803-734-8274 sswaffie@sde.state.sc.us or Douglas Alexander 803-734-3923 dgalexan@sde.state.sc.us

PACT-Alt portfolios and HSAP-Alt materials must be shipped to the contractor no later than April 22.

Committees – Teachers, parents, and administrators who are interested in serving on committees that address alternate assessment issues or to review accommodations and modifications should contact Suzanne Swaffield for an application.

High School Assessment Program (HSAP)

Contact: Nancy Whitlock 803-734-0664 ncwhitlo@sde.state.sc.us

The HSAP and BSAP are scheduled during the same window. The spring 2005 HSAP test dates are as follows.

ELA – Tuesday and Wednesday, April 19 and 20
Mathematics – Thursday, April 21
Make-up dates – April 22 – 29

Orders – The PEM SchoolHouse on-line system closed for initial ordering of spring 2005 HSAP test materials on February 25. Districts may order additional HSAP materials on-line between April 1 and April 27 or fax an additional materials order to PEM.

The **March update file** is used to print pre-identified (Pre-ID) labels, not to place orders for test materials. Based on this file, PEM will produce Pre-ID labels for students who have enrolled or whose HSAP coding status has changed since the January file submission. You must still order test materials for these students, including test booklets, scripts, audiotapes, or videotapes.

PEM's process for determining the number of HSAP test materials to send to districts has been to send the higher of the two counts (January Precode file vs. SchoolHouse) for both regular and customized materials. However, due to errors discovered in the precode file, PEM will provide **customized** materials based on orders via SchoolHouse or fax **only**.

DTCs should call PEM at 1-866-724-7602 if you have any questions about your district's HSAP orders.

Linking Labels – Linking labels (that do not contain any student information) will be used for students who do not have a pre-coded test booklet or a Pre-ID label. The linking labels will be used to match a student's mathematics and ELA scores. When linking labels are used during the spring 2005 administration, students will be **required to write and grid their names on both ELA and math booklets**. The name gridded on the ELA and mathematics test booklets **should be identical**. Slight variations may cause the scores not to be matched. When the names do not match exactly, SASI ID numbers will be used as a back-up for matching. Therefore, districts have the option to require that students also write and grid their SASI number on both booklets.

Early Return of Test Materials – Districts selected for early return will receive notification from AIR in March. Some districts will be asked to return testing materials early for all schools in their district, while others will be asked to do an early return only for designated schools.

Graduation Express Returns – The spring 2005 HSAP administration may include a very few students who are planning to graduate at the end of the 2004-05 school year. Graduation express is available for those students. To ensure early processing of these students' tests, please make sure that the following steps are followed:

- School Test Coordinators darken the "Graduation Express" bubble on the School Header Sheet for test booklets of graduating seniors, and
- District Test Coordinators follow the return procedures for graduation express outlined on pages 18 and 19 of the Test Administration Manual.

Testing LEP Students – Please remember that all students must pass the appropriate exit examination in order to receive a South Carolina state high school diploma. **The language proficiency test administered to LEP students will not substitute for the HSAP ELA test or the BSAP reading and writing subtests for the graduation requirement.** If a student is eligible to take an exit examination, we recommend that students take both the proficiency test and the appropriate exit examination in order to give the student as many opportunities as is possible to pass the exam.

Basic Skills Assessment Program (BSAP) Exit Examination

Contact: Lane Peeler 803-734-8282 lpeeler@sde.state.sc.us

The **final spring** administration of the BSAP is scheduled as follows.

Reading subtest – Tuesday, April 19, 2005

Mathematics subtest – Wednesday, April 20, 2005

Writing subtest – Thursday, April 21, 2005

Writing Make-up – Tuesday, April 26, 2005

Makeup for Reading and Mathematics – the day after the scheduled administration until materials are scheduled for return

The **final summer** administration of the BSAP is scheduled as follows.

Reading and mathematics subtests – July 19-21, 2005

Writing subtest – July 21, 2005

There is not a makeup period for the summer administration.

BSAP will not be administered in fall 2005 or thereafter. Students who have passed one or more BSAP subtests, but not all three, will take needed tests of the HSAP as their exit examination requirement towards receiving a South Carolina High School Diploma. Students will be able to combine BSAP and HSAP scores as shown below. BSAP scores will NOT expire.

BSAP mathematics subtest = HSAP mathematics test

BSAP reading + writing subtests = HSAP ELA test

End-of-Course Examination Program (EOCEP)

Contact: Lane Peeler 803-734-8282 lpeeler@sde.state.sc.us

Score reports for the fall 2004/winter 2005 administration of the EOCEP were delivered to districts on February 18, 2005.

The spring and summer 2005 state testing windows are as follows.

Spring – May 2 – June 9

Summer – June 20 – August 5

Teacher's Guides – Links to the draft Teacher's Guides for Algebra 1/Mathematics for the Technologies 2, English 1, and Physical Science are on the End-of-Course web page at: <http://www.myschools.com/offices/assessment/Programs/endofcourse/index.htm>. The guide for Biology 1/Applied Biology 2 should be posted later this month.

Home School Coding – Home school students are students who receive instruction at home or other place, but not in a regular school. A full definition is included in each TAM and is on page 6 of the EOCEP TAM for spring 2005.

For the EOCEP program, a home school bubble appears on all school headers, rather than having a special header for the district office. During the fall 2004-05 administration, several schools in the state coded regular students as home school. Please emphasize to your School Test Coordinators (STCs) that the bubble should only be gridded if the students are receiving instruction through a home school program.

The system for collecting this information will be changed to discourage errors for the summer 2005 administration.

United States History and Constitution – Preparation for the fifth EOCEP test, United States History and Constitution (USHC), has begun. The Content Review Committee for USHC met recently to establish test specifications and guidelines. The test will be field tested in spring 2006 (student scores will not be available) and implemented in 2006–07 (student scores will be available). The test score will count as 20% of a student's grade beginning with the fall 2007 administration.

On-line Testing – District Test Coordinators have been asked to complete a survey addressing their district's readiness for on-line testing for the summer EOCEP administration. Districts that administer all EOCEP tests to all students during summer school on-line would not be supplied with any answer document or paper versions of the tests.

Electronic and paper score reports from the on-line tests will be available to districts at the same time as the paper/pencil test results.

Comparability of on-line and paper/pencil testing – The Department has pursued on-line testing for several reasons. Initially, on-line testing was developed for adult education students who complete courses at any time during the year. Additional uses were immediately apparent and included unusual situations and summer school. Preparation of paper materials for summer school is problematic because summer school schedules are not set in time for the contractor to adequately estimate print quantities. To alleviate this problem, we were hopeful that all summer testing could be handled on-line. In the fall, a small number of tests was delivered on-line to adult education students. The small scale of the pilot did not provide an adequate sample for determining whether on-line testing would be possible for summer school, so another pilot was proposed for the spring administration. Simultaneously, the Testing Task Force recommended on-line test administration. A few districts have responded to the opportunity to pilot on-line testing in the spring even though we have determined that the current infrastructure will not permit a universal on-line summer administration.

When some tests are delivered in paper form and others are delivered by computer, there could be a concern that the mode of delivery impacts the scores. The Department's preference is to conduct a comparability study, and a full-scale comparability study is planned for the 2005-2006 school year. The issue of comparability studies was discussed at the mid-year Technical Advisory Committee meeting and the Department was advised to rely on studies conducted in other settings. A review of studies shows mixed results with positive and negative effects frequently attributed to flaws in the design of the studies. In general, research supports the comparability of results from the two modes of delivery. The clear exception is writing composition, which is not tested on EOCEP. Some

studies have also noted differences in reading tests delivered by the two modes. These differences seem to reflect differences related to screen changes as required in reading passages. Every effort has been made to mitigate screen complexity in the design of the on-line versions.

Performance Tasks for Gifted and Talented (Project STAR)

Contact: Amelia Brailsford 803-734-8019 abrailsf@sde.state.sc.us

Important upcoming dates for the 2004-05 administration and scoring of the South Carolina Performance Tasks follow.

DATE	ACTIVITY
March 7– 17	Administration of SC Performance Tasks
March 18	Return of materials to Carolinian Consultancy
March 21 – April 7	Pilot of performance tasks
April 8	Return of pilot test materials to Carolinian Consultancy
May 17	SC Performance Tasks reports due to districts

Taxonomy for Testing English Language Learners (TTELL)

Contact: Therese Carr 803-734-3747 tcarr@sde.state.sc.us

A TTELL pilot will take place from April 18-22 in Beaufort and Charleston. The purpose of TTELL is to assist schools in identifying the testing accommodations that are most appropriate for LEP students.

Test of Emerging Academic English: Listening and Speaking (TEAELS)

Contact: Therese Carr 803-734-3747 tcarr@sde.state.sc.us

The pilot study of the TEAELS, an online assessment of English language proficiency in listening and speaking, has been completed. Anderson 5, Lexington 2, and Richland 1 participated in the study. The pilot study took place March 4 - 15. Many thanks to the participating districts and schools.

Achieving Accurate Results for Diverse Learners (AARDL)

Contact: Therese Carr 803-734-3747 tcarr@sde.state.sc.us

The Office of Assessment is conducting a small pilot of the Accommodation Station (AS), a web-based decision-making model to help determine appropriate testing accommodations for students with disabilities. This pilot will assist us in determining the technical specifications of the AS. The pilot will also collect initial feedback from teachers and students about using AS to assist in making accommodation decisions for students. Several districts volunteered to participate in the pilot. Please contact Courtney Johnson at icjohnso@sde.state.sc.us or (803) 734-3552 for more information.

Calculator Survey

Contact: Therese Carr 803-734-3747 tcarr@sde.state.sc.us

On January 28, the calculator survey was re-sent to the districts that had not responded to the November survey. The re-sent calculator survey responses were due back on February 11. The Office of Assessment will be drafting proposals to corporations, foundations, and other potential donors over the next several months to garner funds to purchase calculators. When and if we can provide funds for calculators will depend on the success of our proposals. Please be aware that it will take some time before we are able to offer districts funds for calculators. If you would like to inquire about where we are in the process, please contact Therese Carr at tcarr@sde.state.sc.us.

Office of Assessment Web Site

Information about the testing programs (including this memorandum) may be located on the Office of Assessment web site at <http://www.myschools.com/offices/assessment/>. Information is updated continually. Program information is available for all of the assessment programs.